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LID-Tourism (Wrap-Up)

LID 2002 SHOWS TOURISM ENTREPRENEURS THE WAY TO SMART PARTNERSHIP

By: Noor Hammad Wariman

LANGKAWI, Aug 4 (Bernama) -- Smart partnership, the core theme of the Global 2002 Langkawi International Dialogue, which ended here yesterday, has served as an "eye-opener" for tourism entrepreneurs on this tourist haven to pool their resources to scale greater heights in the local tourism industry.

The two major international-class events -- LID and the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (LIMA) -- being held here biennially gave the impetus and the much-needed push for the tourism industry here, the pulse of the main economic activity in this tourist resort.

Mahamas Travel and Tour Sdn Bhd Managing Director Rosmi Siru said LID, LIMA and other international functions staged here had helped to boost the island's tourism charm.

"Such events gave significant contributions to the economic growth of Langkawi, especially to hoteliers, restaurant operators, textile shop owners and souvenir outlets apart from providing job opportunities to locals," he said.

For the Global 2002 LID, the organisers enlisted the services of Mahamas to provide more than 100 vehicles and 125 drivers to ensure smooth conduct of the three-day dialogue initiated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in 1995.

"Although Mahamas was given the opportunity to provide vehicles and drivers, we cooperated with other companies to supply the additional vehicles required in line with the smart partnership concept advocated by LID," he said.

The additional vehicles and drivers were leased from other tour and travel companies to ferry heads of state and government and foreign delegates.

Mahamas has 65 regular drivers and 195 vehicles, including bus, cars and vans.

He, however, said hiring of vehicles to tourists was not hampered as Mahamas had enough vehicles to cope with the demand from tourists at the Kuah jetty and the Langkawi International Airport in Padang Matsirat.

Langkawi Bumiputera Tourist Boat Association Chairman Kuzaini Kassim readily admitted that international events held here were a boon for the tourism industry here.

"For tourist boat operators, LID has indirectly helped Langkawi which relied on visitors, particularly outside school holiday season," he said.

The operators, numbering more than 20 with 50 boats, conducted round-the-island cruises for tourist groups and students.

They also have brisk business when LID officials hire their boats to go round the islands and the mangrove forests to take a closer look at the beauty of the flora and fauna.

Langkawi Malaysia Airports Bhd Manager Abdul Wahab Mohamad Yusof said smart partnership is being practised by everyone here to ensure smooth operations at the Langkawi International Airport.

"What I can say for sure is that hoteliers, tourism entrepreneurs, restaurant owners and hire-car operators have benefited from the international-class events like LID held here," he said.

Last year, Langkawi received close to two million tourists, including 388,421 foreigners as compared to 1.8 million visitors in the previous

year.

According to statistics released by the Langkawi Development Authority (LADA), about 1.4 million tourists entered via the Kuah jetty, Tanjung Malai jetty (110,596), domestic flights (348,693) and international flights (59,531).

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